

REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 4-11 contain allowable subject matter.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-11 were pending in this application. Claims 1-11 are cancelled by this reply. Claims 22-38 are newly added by this reply. Claims 22, 26, 29, and 35 are independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claims 22, 26, 29, and 35. No new matter is added by way of the newly added claims.

Objections

Claim 10 is objected to by the Examiner. Claim 10 has been canceled by this reply. Accordingly, this objection is now moot.

Drawings

Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to acknowledge the drawings filed on August 22, 2003 as formal.

Acknowledgement of Priority

Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to acknowledge the claim for foreign priority in the present application to Japanese Patent Application No. 2001-048878 filed on February 23, 2001, and the receipt of a certified copy of the priority document filed on December 8, 2003.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 1-2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,317,801 ("Tanaka") in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,325,780 ("Schulz"). Claims 1-2 have been canceled by this reply, thus this rejection is now moot.

Claim 3 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tanaka and Schulz as applied to claim 1-2, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,192,580 ("Hayami"). Claim 3 has been cancelled by this reply, thus this rejection is now moot.

New Claims and Allowable Subject Matter

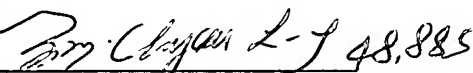
Claims 22-38 have been newly added by this reply. As indicated by the Examiner, cancelled claims 4-11 contained allowable subject matter but were rejected as dependent on a rejected base claim. Newly added independent claims 22, 26, 29, and 35 incorporate the allowable subject matter of cancelled claims 4-11. Specifically, independent claim 22 includes the limitations of cancelled claims 1 and 4, independent claim 26 includes the limitations of cancelled claims 1 and 6, independent claim 29 includes the limitations of cancelled claims 1 and 7, and independent claim 35 includes the limitations of cancelled claims 1 and 10. As such, because the newly added independent claims incorporate the limitations of claim that were indicated as containing allowable subject matter, independent claims 22, 26, 29, and 35 are allowable. Further, dependent claims 23-25, 27-28, 30-34, and 36-38 are allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, favorable consideration of newly added claims 22-38 is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 03310/032001).

Dated: December 20, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

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